

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2850

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 16765

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 16765 VICE 1676T)

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: INDIAN PARLIAMENT MEETS JANUARY 5

1. THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT WILL BEGIN ITS WINTER SESSION
ON JANUARY 5, SEVEN WEEKS LATER THAN IT USUALLY COMMENCES
AND JUST A MONTH AHEAD OF THE SIX-MONTH CONSTITUTIONAL
DEADLINE DATING FROM THE LAST PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.
INFORMED SOURCES STATE THAT THE WINTER SESSION WILL
PROBABLY
TERMINATE ON JANUARY 30, AND BE FOLLOWED BY
A BUDGET SESSION FROM MID-FEBRUARY TO MID-MARCH. THIS
SCHEDULE, IF FOLLOWED, WOULD RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY
OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN EARLY 1976.

2. GOI PRESS RELEASES AND CONGRESS MP SOURCES STATE
THAT THE WINTER SESSION WILL BE "NORMAL," AS OPPOSED
TO THE LAST HECTIC SESSION WHICH WAS ALMOST TOTALLY
DEVOTED TO PASSING AMENDMENTS AND LEGISLATION DESIGNED
TO EXPULCE THE PRIME MINISTER FROM HER LEGAL DIFFI-
CULTIES AND FORMALIZE GOI EMERGENCY POWERS. THERE WILL
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BE A QUESTION-HOUR. (THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE

UPPER HOUSE TOLD EMBOFFS DEC 16 THAT THERE WOULD BE CAREFUL MONITORING OF MP QUESTIONS TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT.) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS, INCLUDING CALLING ATTENTION MOTIONS AND THE PROPOSAL OF BILLS, WILL BE ALLOWED. PARLIAMENT WILL PASS INTO LAW A STACK OF 22 ORDINANCES THAT HAVE PILED UP SINCE THE LAST SESSION. BKA SUMMARY OF THE ORDINANCES IS BEING POUCHED TO NEA/INS.) THERE ARE ALSO 25 OFFICIAL BULLS PENDING BEFORE THE TWO HOUSES. THE PRESS WILL ATTEND, ALTHOUGH A RECENT ORDINANCE STRIPPED JOURNALISTS OF IMMUNITY IN REPORTING PARLIAMENTARY PROCDEDINGS.

3. THERE WILL BE A PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO A JOINT SITTING OF BOTH HOUSES ON JANUARY 5 IN WHICH SOME OF THE TOUCHY ISSUES BEFORE THIS SESSION MAY BE RAISED. THE GOVERNMENT MUST INTRODUCE A BILL EXTENDING THE LIFE OF PARLIAMENT, IF ELECTIONS ARE TO BE POSTPONED. SIMILAR BILLS WILL HAVE TO BE INTRODUCED WITH REGARD TO THE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR THE TAMIL NADU AND KERALA STATE LEGISLATURES. GOI BILLS ON PARLIAMENTARY REFORM ARE ALSO EXPECTED. THA POSITION OF GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN DURING DEBATES ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY, POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND THE RESTORATION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES WILL BE CLOSELY FOLLOWED AS INDICATORS OF GOI'S INTENTIONS IN THESE AREAS. THE POSSIBLE EXTENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS EXPECTED TO BE INTRODUCED DURING THE WINTER SESSION WAS REVIEWED IN NEW DELHI 16634.

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